



### For more information:

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<http://epa.gov/yellowstoneriverspill>

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Spill Information Line:  
888-382-0043

Wildlife Hotline:  
800-259-0596

State of Montana  
406-657-0231  
[www.yellowstoneriveroilspill.mt.gov](http://www.yellowstoneriveroilspill.mt.gov)

Unified Health Command  
[www.riverstonehealth.org](http://www.riverstonehealth.org)

Vendors, call: J.C. Harris  
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832-457-7225

# Silvertip Pipeline Incident: Update

July 13, 2011

## Response Summary

- EPA response crews and ExxonMobil Pipeline Co. work crews, overseen by EPA, the US Coast Guard, the State of Montana and state and federal wildlife agencies, are focusing the response on the 20 miles of the Yellowstone River immediately downstream of Laurel, MT.
- The area monitored extends to Glendive, Montana; Oil has been visibly confirmed by Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Techniques (SCAT) Teams as far as 67 miles downstream from the spill site.
- Nearly 700 workers (federal, State, ExxonMobil Pipeline Co. and private contractors) are currently responding to the Silvertip Pipeline incident.
- EPA's primary concern is protecting public health and the environment.
- EPA continues to hold ExxonMobil Pipeline Co., the responsible party, accountable for assessment and cleanup.
- EPA will remain on-site to ensure cleanup and restoration are protective of public health and the environment.
- EPA is finalizing sampling plans using State of Montana regulatory standards to ensure the response is protective of human health and the environment.
- EPA is monitoring air quality as well as surface water, private drinking water wells, and irrigation wells. In addition, EPA has directed ExxonMobil to conduct extensive sampling. EPA is conducting verification testing for at least 10% of all samples collected by ExxonMobil Pipeline Co and their contractors.
- As Yellowstone River flows recede and more floodplain is accessible, EPA initiated soil and sediment sampling.
- EPA posts sampling data on its website as soon as the data is available.
- The Agency has issued an administrative order under the Clean Water Act to ExxonMobil Pipeline Co., directing the company to take a number of cleanup and restoration efforts. EPA continues to carefully and thoroughly review their work plans, data and field activities with the State of Montana.

***“EPA is overseeing ExxonMobil’s assessment and cleanup to make sure that public health and the environment are protected. EPA will make sure ExxonMobil fulfills its obligations.”***

## Assessment, Sampling and Monitoring

### Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Techniques Team Targets Areas

The multi-agency SCAT Teams are focused on the areas between Laurel and Billings (Divisions A and B on the map), meticulously assessing the most heavily affected areas of the spill. More teams will deploy as the river levels go down. State, other Federal agency and contractor personnel are participating in this effort. Crews are currently

working at 45 locations.

Now that the river levels are dropping, work crews can access more of the Yellowstone River floodplain and this means increased cleanup progress. Once the areas are assessed, cleanup will be conducted as needed and then evaluated to verify that no further response is needed. Ultimately, the State of Montana will determine how much damage has been done and how much restoration is needed.

SCAT Teams follow 3-steps:

- 1) Assess the location and degree of contamination;
- 2) Proceed with cleanup according to standards and recommendations;
- 3) Evaluate the cleanup to determine if additional response is needed.

SCAT team member collecting water samples.



### Response Actions taken by or directed by EPA include:

- EPA is leading Unified Command Structure response effort
- As of 7/12/11, cleanup crews have used the following oil-collecting materials: 34,600 feet of absorbent booms, 400 feet of hard booms (containment), 2,848 feet of absorbent rolls, 1,841 feet of Viscous Sweep and 241,400 absorbent pads
- Crews have recovered 942 barrels of oily liquids, which is approximately 9 barrels of oil and 505 cubic yards of oily solids
- Liquid waste is going to the refinery for processing, and solid waste is presently being stored but will ultimately be disposed of in a permitted landfill
- Drafting and finalizing response action plans
- Drafting and finalizing sampling plans
- Issuing an Order under the Clean Water Act to ExxonMobil Pipeline Co.
- Obtained 2 helicopters for reconnaissance
- Obtained 46 boats for identifying oiled areas, transporting cleanup crews to those areas
- Sampling local public water supplies
- Sampling several hundred private drinking water wells
- Monitoring air quality
- Sampling soil and sediment as water levels recede to allow access
- Posting sampling and monitoring results on the EPA website
- Daily press releases
- Daily press briefings
- Regular briefings for local officials
- Regular public meetings
- Following up on calls to spill information line

## Roles and Responsibilities of the Primary Silvertip Oil Response Team

**US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** The response is led by EPA's Incident Commander, a federal On-scene Coordinator. The response is coordinated under a Unified Command Structure. EPA is leading the effort in close coordination with its State, Tribal, federal, and local partners. In this role, EPA is directing and overseeing response activities.

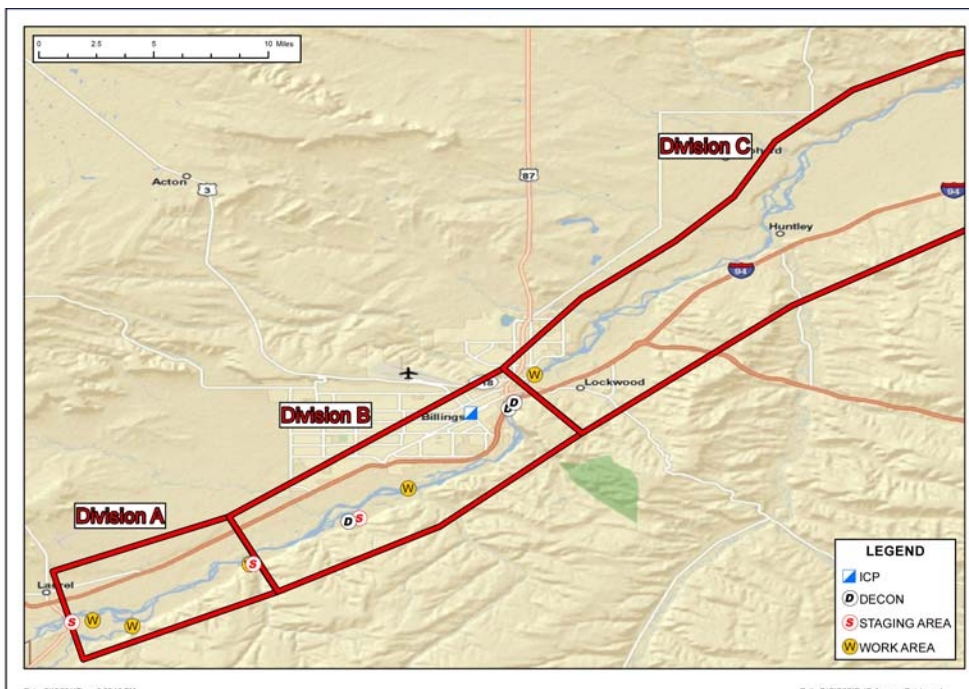
**Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** The role of DEQ is to make sure that the needs and interests of Montana and its citizens are met and that the cleanup is done right.

**ExxonMobil** As the owner and operator of the Silvertip Pipeline, EPA is holding ExxonMobil accountable for the cleanup and working with the Department of the Interior, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and state and local agencies to ensure that ExxonMobil, as the Responsible Party, addresses any and all potential impacts of the oil spill.

**US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service members are supporting Wildlife Operations by conducting aerial wildlife surveys; embedding with cleanup crews as Resource Advisors; and participating in Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique teams. These Service members are applying their varied areas of expertise to the incident. Service members with backgrounds in environmental contaminants, toxicology and wildlife biology are contributing to the overall effort on a daily basis. Going forward, Service members will be helping review work plans for long-term recovery, remediation and restoration.

**US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)** of the USDOT is responsible for the safety oversight of over 2 million miles of hazardous liquid and natural gas pipelines in the United States. We do this through our safety regulations and a strong enforcement program based on our field audits of each pipeline system. During a high profile event like the Exxon Silvertip spill, PHMSA inspectors are focused on two things -- immediately eliminating any imminent harm that the pipeline may pose, and conducting an accident investigation. The results of the investigation are used to determine what long term remedial actions that the pipeline company must take to ensure safety and protection of the environment, as well as support any enforcement actions that may be considered. USDOT investigators also keep the decision makers at the incident command system informed of any operational impacts that the pipeline may pose on the response.

**RiverStone Health (Yellowstone City-County Health Department) and the Unified Health Command** RiverStone Health, Yellowstone County's public health organization, has responsibility to protect the community from potential health threats. Our efforts assist the community in preventing, preparing, responding to and recovering from events that may adversely impact the public's health and safety. RiverStone Health partners with Billings Clinic, St. Vincent Healthcare and Yellowstone County Disaster and Emergency Services in the Unified Health Command which ensures the coordination of public health system efforts.



The photo above shows an assessment crew along the Yellowstone River on July 11, 2011.

The map at the left shows Divisions A, B, and C of the response. Division C extends to the border with Treasure County and then proceeds downstream. Work is focused primarily in Divisions A and B.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How far has the oil spread downstream?

Oil has been confirmed approximately 67 miles downstream from the release by the Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Techniques (SCAT) Team; however, no significant oil has been reported beyond Pompey's Pillar (approximately 45 miles from the spill site). The majority of the impacted areas appear to be in a 20-mile area between Laurel and Billings, Montana. The response area includes the Yellowstone River all the way to Glendive, MT but no oil has been spotted that far downstream.

## What actions are being taken to contain and cleanup the oil?

As of July 13, there are nearly 700 workers responding to the Silvertip Oil Spill. The pipeline has been shut down; oil-absorbant materials have been placed to trap oil; crews are assessing areas for possible impacts and necessary cleanup; air, water, soil, and sediment samples have been collected;

## Have there been impacts to wildlife?

To date, the following wildlife impacts have been reported: one warbler was found oiled but is alert and responsive; two toads; one garter snake, and one duck (unidentified species). If residents see birds covered with oil, they should call Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406- 247-2940 or Wildlife Hotline at 800-259-0596.

## Is drinking water affected?

Operators of downstream public drinking water system which drew water from the Yellowstone River were immediately notified after the spill. Those systems have since been tested for more than 100 contaminants and were found to meet drinking water standards. Efforts are underway to sample private drinking water wells between Laurel and Billings. View results at EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/yellowstoneriverspill>

## Has air quality been affected?

Air monitoring is being conducted using real-time instruments. The air is being tested for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) associated with an oil spill and these air monitoring results have been "non-detect" for VOCs. View results and locations at EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/yellowstoneriverspill>

## Who is paying for the cleanup?

ExxonMobil, as the owner and operator of the Silvertip Pipeline, is responsible for the cleanup.

## What happens next?

Assessment continues and will expand as additional areas of the floodplain become accessible as the Yellowstone River levels drop. EPA will continue to work with the State to ensure that cleanup standards are met.